

NORTHEASTERN BOUNDARY.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

TRANSMITTING

*To the Committee of Ways and Means the letter of Albert Smith, esq., relative to the northeastern boundary.*

MARCH 9, 1844.

Read, and laid upon the table.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, February 16, 1844.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to you, herewith, for the information of the committee, the copy of a letter recently addressed to this department by Albert Smith, esq., the commissioner appointed on the part of the United States for running and marking that portion of the boundary-line between the United States and the British dominions which is described in the 1st article of the treaty of Washington; and to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,

A. P. UPSHUR.

HON. JAMES J. MCKAY,  
*Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, H. R.*

WASHINGTON, January 23, 1844.

SIR: The undersigned, commissioner on the part of the United States, appointed to run, trace, and mark that portion of the line of boundary between the United States and the British dominions in North America, which is described in the 1st article of the treaty of Washington, concluded August 9, 1842, as extending from "the monument at the source of the river St. Croix, as designated and agreed to by the commissioners under the 5th article of the treaty of 1794 between the Governments of the United States and Great Britain; thence north, following the exploring line run and marked by the surveyors of the two Governments in the years 1817 and 1818, under the 5th article of the treaty of Ghent, to its intersection with the river St. John, and to the middle of the channel thereof; thence up the middle of the main channel of the said river St. John, to the mouth of the river St. Francis; thence up the middle of the

channel of the said river St. Francis, and of the lakes through which it flows, to the outlet of the Lake Pohenagamook; thence southwesterly, in a straight line, to a point on the northwest branch of the river St. John, which point shall be ten miles distant from the main branch of the St. John, in a straight line, and in the nearest direction; but if the said point should be found to be less than seven miles from the nearest point of the summit or crest of the highlands that divide those rivers which empty themselves into the St. Lawrence from those which fall into the river St. John, then the said point shall be made to recede down the said northwest branch of the river St. John to a point seven miles, in a straight line, from the said summit or crest; thence in a straight line, in a course about south, eight degrees west, to the point where the parallel of latitude of  $46^{\circ} 25'$  north intersects the southwest branch of the St. John; thence southerly, by the said branch, to the source thereof in the highlands, at the Metjarmette portage; thence down along the said highlands which divide the waters which empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic ocean, to the head of Hall's stream; thence down the middle of said stream, till the line thus run intersects the old line of boundary surveyed and marked by Valentine and Collins, previously to the year 1774, as the forty-fifth degree of north latitude, and which has been known and understood to be the line of actual division between the States of New York and Vermont on one side, and the British province of Canada on the other; and from said point of intersection, west, along the said dividing line, as heretofore known and understood, to the Iroquois or St. Lawrence river;”—has the honor to make the following report:

In pursuance of the provisions of the treaty, Lieutenant Col. James B. Bucknal Estcourt, the British commissioner, and the undersigned, met at Bangor, in the State of Maine, on the 1st day of May last.

It was then agreed that the joint operations of the commission should commence at the monument at the source of the St. Croix; and, as soon as it was possible to get the several parties, with the necessary supplies on the line, that the work should be commenced, and prosecuted as extensively as circumstances would allow.

The backwardness of the season, the depth of the snow, and the severity of the weather, precluded the possibility of commencing working in the field until the month of June; and the commission was accordingly adjourned to meet at Houlton on the 1st day of that month.

The British commissioner had been instructed by his Government “to accelerate as much as possible the completion of the line of boundary;” and he had been furnished with ample means to accomplish his object.

He was also directed to urge this point “*earnestly*” upon the American commissioner, and “to omit no efforts to induce him to unite his endeavors with those of the British commissioner in pushing on the joint work with the greatest practicable celerity.”

Admonished by the amount of the appropriation made by the last Congress for running this line of boundary, that it would be impossible to co-operate with the British commissioner to the extent contemplated by his instructions, the undersigned addressed a note to the Secretary of State, suggesting that fact. In his reply to that note, the Secretary of State, under date of May 15, stated to the undersigned that a sum, amounting to ten or twelve thousand dollars of the appropriation of the previous

year, for exploring the northeastern boundary-line, remained in the treasury, which should be transferred to the appropriation for running the line under the treaty.

The undersigned had no hesitation, therefore, upon meeting the British commissioner at Houlton, on the 1st of June, in giving him positive assurance of his co-operation in the most vigorous and extensive prosecution of the survey.

The parties were then organized, and extended, under different engineers, and at various points along the line, from the source of the St. Croix to the northwest branch of the St. John—a distance of nearly 300 miles.

The American party consisted of Captain Joseph E. Johnson, and Lieutenants Lee, Thom, and Meade, of the United States topographical engineers; and of Messrs. Folliot, T. Lally, Alexander W. Longfellow, and John F. Anderson, civil engineers.

The lamented indisposition of Major James D. Graham, who had been detailed as principal astronomer and chief of the American scientific corps, deprived the commission of his experience and valuable aid in the field until the latter part of the season.

Much benefit was, however, derived in the organization of the parties and the plans of operations, from the valuable suggestions in his written correspondence. Captain Johnson, who supplied the place of Major Graham, organized the scientific corps, and had the direction of their operations until the arrival of the latter; and I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which he performed those duties.

The American force was divided into five parties. To the 1st, the duty was assigned to cut out, survey, and place monuments upon the line from the St. Croix to the St. John, under the charge of Mr. Lally, and Mr. Anderson as his assistant; to the 2d, under Lieut. Lee, to sound the channel of the river St. John, to enable the commissioners to divide and apportion the islands therein; to the 3d, under Lieutenant Thom, to survey the river St. John, from the intersection of the meridian line until he should meet the 4th party, under Mr. Longfellow, who was to survey the said river from the mouth of the St. Francis to the place of meeting the party under Lieutenant Thom; while Captain Johnson, with Lieutenant Meade, undertook the survey of the St. John, from the St. Francis to the northwest branch, and to ascertain and fix the point on said northwest branch which should be ten miles distant from the main river, in a straight line, and in the nearest direction, and at least seven miles from the nearest point of the crest of the highlands which divide those rivers which empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence from those which fall into the St. John.

Lieutenant French, with a detachment from the 1st regiment of artillery, was detailed for this survey, and performed efficient and valuable service, under the direction of Captain Johnson.

The duties assigned to the several engineers were performed with signal ability; and whatever praise is due for the amount of work done, or the manner of its performance, belongs exclusively to them, and the parties under their charge. They have manifested, throughout, the greatest zeal and assiduity in the public service.

It was agreed by the commissioners that those portions of the line which extended through forests should be cut out to the width of thirty

feet; and that monuments of cast iron, with appropriate inscriptions, should be placed thereon, at every mile, and at the crossing of any considerable stream and road.

Monuments of a large size, however, were to be placed at the source of the St. Croix, at the intersection of the line with the St. John, and at a few other important points.

That the "exploring" line of 1817, from the St. Croix to the St. John, which had become very obscure, might be the more easily followed by the parties employed in cutting it out, the British commissioner, and Mr. Lally, on the part of the American commissioner, at the commencement of the season, traced it through, and reblazed the old marks. It was found to be not perfectly straight, and inclining generally to the west of a due-north course—the average of the angle of departure from the true meridian being about twenty minutes.

It had been agreed by the commissioners that this section of the boundary-line (from the St. Croix to the St. John) should be equally divided, and that the southern half should be cut out by the American, and the northern by the British party; and that, after it had been thus cut out, the survey should be made jointly, by engineers of both parties.

The operations were thus commenced, nearly simultaneously by the several parties, along the line from the St. Croix to the northwest branch of the St. John. They were prosecuted, through the season, with great assiduity and vigor, until the severity of the weather compelled a suspension; the last party having left the line on the 1st of December, with two feet of snow on the ground.

Major Graham arrived at Houlton the latter part of August, and assumed the direction of the scientific corps. Notwithstanding his delicate state of health, he proceeded to the line; ascended the St. John to the northwest branch, making numerous astronomical and magnetic observations at important points along the line; ascertained the latitude and longitude of the ten-mile point upon said branch, as established by Captain Johnson; verified his observations of the previous year at the outlet of Lake Pohenagamook; and descended the river, which was then full of ice, about the 10th of November.

It is due to that distinguished officer to add, that the commission has derived great advantage from his labors upon the line in previous years—his surveys and observations having been found to be uniformly so accurate, as, in many instances, to be taken as guides for our own operations.

After the completion of the survey of that portion of the St. John assigned to him, Lieutenant Thom ascended and surveyed the river St. Francis, from its mouth to the outlet of Lake Pohenagamook.

A summary of the work accomplished the past season upon the boundary-line, by the joint commission appointed under the treaty of Washington, is, therefore, as follows:

The line from the monument at the source of the St. Croix to its intersection with the river St. John—a distance of about 78 miles, extending through a dense forest—has been established, cut out to the width of 30 feet, and surveyed. Upon it, monuments of cast iron, six feet in length, and six inches square at the base, and four at the top, of obelisk form, have been placed at every mile, at the crossing of every stream and road, and at every angle.



These monuments are hollow, into which are fitted cedar posts, extending a foot or more below the iron, and are then placed three feet in the ground. They were manufactured at Alger's foundry, at South Boston, and bear this inscription: on one side, "Boundary Line;" on the opposite side, "*Treaty of Washington, August 9th, 1842.*" The other sides bear the names of the commissioners. The number of monuments already placed on the line is about 120. The number cast is 200, at \$6 each. It is the intention of the commissioners to have similar monuments along the whole extent of the line upon the land.

The river St. John has been surveyed, from the intersection of the meridian line nearly to the mouth of the northwest branch. Astronomical and magnetic observations have been made at many important points upon that river; its channel has been ascertained by soundings, and the islands apportioned to the two nations.

The river St. Francis has been carefully surveyed, from its junction with the St. John to Lake Pohenagamook.

The "outlet" of that lake has been agreed upon, and established by the commissioners, and the latitude and longitude thereof ascertained.

The point upon the northwest branch of the St. John, 10 miles from the main river, in a straight line, and in the nearest direction, has been ascertained and established; its latitude and longitude determined; together with the fact that said point is more than seven miles from the summit of the highlands.

The number of laborers employed under the American engineers has averaged through the season from 90 to 100.

The whole amount of expenditures up to January 1, 1844, has been about \$23,000: all the bills not having been rendered, I cannot state the precise sum.

When the engineers, who have been engaged in making plats and astronomical computations of their work, since they left the field, shall have presented them to the head of the scientific corps, they will be placed, together with this report, in your department.

In consequence of the observations of the British astronomers having been sent to England, to be examined by the astronomer royal, it will not be possible to make any progress in the maps, which the commissioners are required by the treaty to draw, the present winter.

The work has been conducted during the season with the utmost harmony; and not a single instance of serious disagreement has occurred between the engineers or the commissioners, to interrupt or render unpleasant the operations of any of the parties.

The British commissioner has manifested, on all occasions, the single purpose to do justice; and, in cases where the line was somewhat doubtful, has yielded as cheerfully when the evidence preponderated against his Government, as if it had been in its favor.

The commissioners had a meeting in this city on the 28th of December, at which arrangements were made for still more extensive operations the next season, provided the appropriation of the American Congress shall warrant them;—the British Government having furnished its commissioner with ample means for carrying on the work.

The cost of transportation the next season will be much enhanced, in consequence of having no communication with the line by water. Much of the supplies will be necessarily carried to the line upon men's backs,

unless an appropriation be made in season to take advantage of the snow in the woods, and the ice on the river and swamps.

The British commissioner is now availing himself of that advantage, by transporting his provisions on sleds.

You will perceive, sir, the unpleasant predicament in which the undersigned is placed, having, under the circumstances named, exceeded the appropriation made by the last Congress some \$8,000—an amount which is daily increased by interest upon loans he has been compelled to contract.

Should the commissioners be permitted to carry out the plan of operations to which they have agreed, it is estimated that the sum of \$35,000 will be required by the American commissioner, over and above the sum in which he is now in arrears.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALBERT SMITH,  
U. S. Commissioner.

To the Hon. A. P. UPSHUR,  
Secretary of State.

NORTHWESTERN BOUNDARY

RESOLUTIONS

THE LEGISLATURE OF ILLINOIS

Resolved, in relation to the northwestern boundary.

March 9, 1850.

Read and referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

Whereas, in making the late treaty with the British Government, no provision was not made, and thereby the territory of Oregon is left in dispute between the Government of the United States and the Government of Great Britain; therefore,

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois, (the Senate concurring thereto) That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their efforts to procure the adoption of the proper measures to establish the northwestern boundary, and to settle the controversy between the United States Government and the Kingdom of Great Britain, in relation to said boundary.

Resolved, That the Governor be requested to forward copies of the foregoing resolution and resolution to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

Wm. A. B. Jones.

1891

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You will observe, Sir, the amount of the loan is about the same as the amount of the loan, having under the circumstances, caused, exceeded the appropriation made by the last Congress, viz. \$20,000, an amount which is now increased by interest upon the loan has been compelled to contribute.

Should the Commission be required to carry out the plan of operation, to which they have agreed, it is estimated that the sum of \$25,000 will be required by the American Government, over and above the sum to which he is now in arrears.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, yours, Sir, obedient servant.

W. H. SMITH,

U. S. Commissioner.

To the Hon. J. P. Morgan,  
Secretary of State.